

MISSILE DEFENSE IN EUROPE – WHO DECIDES?

BY

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The pending Obama Administration policy on missile defense is the quintessential driver for missile defense in Europe. The current world events serve to confirm the growing threat to the security of the homeland and American allies. The Ballistic Missile Defense System – European Component serves to provide the United States homeland defense against a ballistic missile launched from Iran or another rogue state. Despite a myriad of strategic factors and considerations that constitute obstacles to employing the U.S. system in Europe, the deciding factor is ultimately the political decision by the President of the United States. Protecting the U.S. homeland and America's North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies against a ballistic missile attack is a fundamental vital interest of the United States, and deployment of missile defense elements to Europe therefore serves to further U.S. strategic interests. The President must agree to move forward with missile defense writ large, and more specifically with missile defense in Europe while working to minimize the domestic and transatlantic political distracters to its implementation.

MISSILE DEFENSE IN EUROPE – WHO DECIDES?

This paper addresses the primary obstacles to employing the missile defense (MD) capability required to adequately defend the eastern coast of the United States against ballistic missiles launched from Iran or another rogue state. Although the Obama Administration faces several strategic challenges regarding the decision to move forward with MD in Europe, the deciding factor is ultimately a political rather than a technical or cost consideration. To protect the U.S. homeland and America's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies against a ballistic missile attack is a fundamental vital interest of the United States, and deployment of MD components to Europe therefore serves to further U.S. strategic interests. This paper argues that the United States must continue to move forward with MD in Europe and work to minimize the domestic and transatlantic political distracters to its implementation.

Strategic Challenges

A missile defense system capability in Europe is critical to the defense of the United States and its NATO allies against a potential ballistic missile attack. The United States has pursued missile defense to protect the homeland against a limited ballistic missile attack for over 20 years. A limited attack is a single ballistic missile or a few ballistic missiles launched against a target in the United States. A limited attack is not meant to address the "leakers" expected if Russia or China were to launch an unexpected massive attack of several hundred or thousand(s) missiles toward the United States.

In pursuit of a MD capability against a limited attack, the United States developed the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). Currently that system defends the

western flank of the United States against a missile launch from North Korea. The United States plans to position additional elements of the BMDS in Europe to adequately defend the eastern coast against ballistic missiles launched from Iran or another rogue state.¹ The planned employment of the European elements, referred to as the Ballistic Missile Defense System - European Components (BMDS-EC),² has recently come under scrutiny as U.S., European allies, and Russian Federation (RF) interests complicate the political complexity of the issue and challenge the implementation of this employment.

There are three strategic challenges facing the realization of an effective MD capability in Europe. The first significant challenge lies with the strategic leadership in the United States and their demonstrated commitment to MD for America. The second lies with NATO leadership and the American allies as NATO currently struggles with the political decision for any MD system capability. The last challenge is posed by the RF who perceives the employment as an incursion of its strategic area of influence.

The Obama Administration and the 111th Congress must demonstrate to the world their unwavering support to defend America. They must manage the competing demands for the billions of dollars of the national budget and generate a way-ahead that incorporates the implementation of BMDS and the continuation of the program writ large. This acceptance is inclusive of BMDS-EC as an integral part of the complete and adequate defense of the homeland.

The other challenges lie in Europe. Specifically, the challenge is for NATO leadership and its member states to agree to a system capability to protect the Alliance against a potential attack. NATO agreement concerning a MD capability decision is

crucial for the Alliance to remain relevant in today's changing world. Agreement would demonstrate collective security and signal unity to the Russians. The RF has openly objected to America's intent to field MD elements in Europe. Although, both NATO interests and RF objections are strategic challenges complicating the employment of BMDS-EC, they are not deciding factors. The decision resides with the President of the United States. None of these nations, nor the Alliance itself, will stop a determined America from defending itself if the President issues the orders to employ the MD system in Europe.

Background

As Cold War history reminds us, the introduction and development of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons during the twentieth century provided adversaries the ability to threaten each other's survival. The totality of the unlimited nature of nuclear warfare with unlimited objectives using unlimited means was real, yet unconscionable to Americans.³ As the Cold War evolved, periods of proliferation, stalemate, and deterrence ensued. Lawrence Freedman, an acknowledged nuclear strategist provides an understanding of how these concepts interrelate - "the sole long-term role of nuclear weapons was to deter their use by the enemy ... [with] the simple view that, in conditions of nuclear stalemate, arsenals of these tremendously powerful weapons tend to cancel each other out."⁴ Hence, the 1950's stalemate produced a strategy of massive retaliation that was never very feasible and was consequently short-lived. During this time period the United States intended to deter aggression by depending primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate (with nuclear weapons), instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing.⁵ The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the

monumental build-up of the capability to deliver massive nuclear strikes by ballistic missiles, resulted in a strategic stalemate necessitating the adoption of a deterrence strategy.

This approach also assumes that no defense is possible and each side is mutually vulnerable. During his presidency, Ronald Reagan decided to address the vulnerability aspect of this assumption. His concern focused on the ability to address an accidental launch of a single (or few) ballistic nuclear-tipped missile(s). His vision was to produce a capability that could intercept an accidental launch and dissolve the situation before an inevitable and automatic massive retaliation by the United States led to nuclear holocaust. Consequently, to offset this vulnerability, the President decided to make missile defense a part of his national security policy.⁶ The program envisioned by President Reagan outlived his administration, the Cold War and the Soviet Union, and its legacy is thriving today as the BMDS.

In the last few decades, the United States developed and built its homeland elements of the BMDS while the RF faded from the stature as a superpower once held by its Soviet predecessor. In fact, it was during this period that NATO underwent significant enlargement by adding the former non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries and three of the former Soviet Republics.⁷ The United States pursued its MD program unimpeded from external scrutiny or interests until recently when the program progressed to its current phase. This phase entails modernizing existing facilities, constructing additional radars, and emplacing an interceptor site in Europe.

The program evolved and through legislative action and subsequent administrations' policy decisions now legally binds U.S. leadership to pursue and deploy

missile defenses. For example, the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 states “it is the policy of the United States to deploy ... an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate).”⁸ The Department of Defense reinforced its efforts after an extensive review at the turn of the century with its 2002 Directive that provided key priorities and specific direction to execute the Missile Defense Program and establish the Missile Defense Agency (MDA).⁹ Other legislative and policy action in the last decade further demonstrate the U.S. resolve and resilience for MD despite a growing swell of opposition to the program.

The Bush Administration specifically acknowledged its support for the MD initiatives as outlined in the President’s 2002 National Security Presidential Directive 23 (NSPD 23), *National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense*, stating that “defending the American people against these new threats is my highest priority as Commander in Chief, and the highest priority of my Administration.”¹⁰ This policy announcement sent a very clear message to the world and also generated significant tensions and opposition amongst European nations and by the RF. The RF directly opposes positioning U.S. MD elements in Europe. However, instead of discounting the RF objections and further stimulating the escalation of tensions reminiscent of the Cold War era, President Bush took the initiative and implemented an unprecedented approach toward the RF and our allies.

The Bush Administration developed specific guidance and took definitive actions to address the challenges presented by these contributing factors. Specifically, the administration adopted a very aggressive engagement approach and reinforced bi-

lateral relations with the RF and many European countries. This unprecedented approach included intense dialogue and proposals that professed complete cooperation and transparency with our NATO allies and the RF, mutual assurance that the BMDS-EC is not threatening to the RF security and their offensive nuclear capability, and introduced a proposal to couple the progress of construction and operational implementation of the European sites with the maturity of Iranian capabilities.¹¹ In attempt to positively influence the European political environment, as well as promulgate a clear understanding of the MD components capabilities by the RF, the Administration and MDA embarked on an extensive diplomacy campaign. The efforts included frequent visits to many European capitals outlining the BMDS-EC capabilities and reassure all nations that the system does not threaten the RF.

Despite the unique approach and efforts, the RF's antics did not dissipate and continued to negatively influence the situation. The RF continued to pursue an aggressive course of objection to the placement of U.S. capabilities in the Czech Republic and Poland, generating feelings in the headquarters at NATO and among member nations reminiscent of the Cold War. This Cold War sentiment and discussions among the allies recently drove NATO Defense Ministers to conclude that "any version of the NATO missile defense network in Europe will include the elements of the U.S. global missile defense placed in Poland and the Czech Republic."¹² This simple conclusion is a major step forward for NATO to possess a MD capability in the future and clearly demonstrates a strengthening of collective security.

NATO favorably continues its internal debate whether it should pursue any organic MD capability. The debate leverages both the Bush Administration approach

and the aggressive RF objections. NATO supports the American system in Europe¹³ and the previously described U.S. proposal to the RF to couple the progress of construction and operational implementation of the European sites with the maturity of threat operational capabilities and developments.

The frictions generated in NATO and with Russia regarding the BMDS-EC have also sparked discussions in the United States. The discussion topics are addressed below as strategic factors bearing on the problem. These factors serve to influence the pending decision(s) on MD by the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress. Primarily, the discussions consider MD prioritization in the face of the current economic crisis and the staggering military budget that includes the cost of the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Rest assured, the American leadership will make decisions commensurate with the national interests of the United States, including protecting against attack on the territory and people of the United States and the grand strategic objective to preserve American security.

Strategic Factors

Russian Opposition. The RF has openly expressed its dissatisfaction with the U.S. intent to field MD elements in Europe. The level of significance of the RF interests and objections are inconclusive. Should the United States (and NATO) allow the RF opposition to persuade it (and NATO) to abandon its objective? On the contrary, a more comprehensive and global defensive system can be achieved through transparent and cooperative approaches with the RF. Although this ideal situation may never present itself, participating nations should strive for it or face the potential of an ugly return to the lethal and threatening dynamics prevalent during the days of the Cold War.

The RF continues to stimulate emotion among NATO Allies with their persistent hostile rhetoric and actions. This includes their objections to the BMDS-EC positioned in Europe, their threats to target allies with missiles, and their incursion into Georgia in 2008.¹⁴ The RF approach includes aggressive objection to the placement of U.S. capabilities in the Czech Republic and Poland. The typical RF technique is to initially present very strong and objectionable public statements or actions followed by clarifications that signal a softer stand or position. This approach allows RF leadership to appease the Russian people and simultaneously create bargaining and negotiating leverage for both the RF and other international states.¹⁵ This tactic and the ensuing rhetoric is reflective of the Soviet behavior during the Cold War.

This aggressive blunderous approach has backfired for the RF as the Alliance has instead rallied around the intangible beliefs espoused in the charter – indivisibility and collective security. The RF rhetoric and threats invoked responses from member nations both individually and collectively, in the press and in sessions at NATO Headquarters. For example, one strong collective response was the suspension of the regularly scheduled quarterly ambassador-level meetings of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in August in response to the military action against Georgia. Another is the collective support of the BMDS-EC previously addressed in this paper and reinforced by the actions and efforts of individual member nations. Additionally, the Allies individually and collectively have addressed Russian behavior directly to the RF Ambassador during the NRC meetings. These expressions of policy and positions by the NATO Allies demonstrate the indivisibility and collective security that is truly representative of the Alliance.

To further complicate the situation for the Russians, the strategic consequences of the incursion into Georgia and the economic crisis confronting the world are gripping the RF.¹⁶ The new RF does not have the economic stability nor the defense resource conversion infrastructure established to challenge the collective capabilities of NATO. Any attempts to replicate the superpower capabilities once possessed by the Soviet Union may serve to replicate disaster, a disaster similar to economic and infrastructure conditions that contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union.

In essence, the RF tactics are backfiring and perceived as directly threatening to the survival, security and sovereignty of several NATO and European Allies. This approach, if not abandoned by RF leadership serves to further magnetize NATO. This approach is construed as detrimental and continues to drive the Alliance toward unconditional resolve. NATO, and more specifically several of its member nations, consider the Russian behavior threatening. These actions and rhetoric ironically drive NATO to be more relevant in its sphere of influence.

Relevance of Deterrence. Strategic leaders must address the relevance of potentially incorrect or out-dated policy and strategy. The main theme of this paper argues that the Administration must continue the MD program. Additionally, many individuals and countries associate the BMDS program with a deterrence strategy. However, such a correlation and argument are not appropriate when considering failed state and non-state actors. Thus, it is essential to clarify the application of the strategy of deterrence as it is often incorrectly applied to BMDS.

Deterrence and its application, its associated friction, and its inherent risks must be considered by the Administration. But it must be done within an appropriate context.

The United States' long-standing strategy of deterrence as previously outlined in this paper is applicable today when dealing with credible and respondent nation states. Deterrence means preventing aggressive action (or WMD use) by ensuring in the mind of the potential adversary that the risks of the action outweigh the benefits while considering the potential consequences of inaction. Naturally, a responsible nuclear-capable nation-state adheres to deterrence theory to avoid any level of nuclear confrontation or retaliation. Therefore, this strategy is effective with credible and responsible nations. Deterrence in this form exists among nuclear powers today.

Failed states and terrorist organizations do not necessarily adhere to traditional politics or theories of warfare – a basis for the current deterrence strategy. Well-known international relations theorist Kenneth Waltz, argues that the logic of a deterrence strategy presumes that, “although we are defenseless, if you attack we will punish you to an extent that more than cancels your gains.”¹⁷ However, this logic does not correlate to failed states or terrorists. It does not apply to non-state actors because the commensurate consequences implied in the definition of deterrence are nonexistent. Therefore, although deterrence is practical with nation-states, it is not practical with non-state actors. Hence, the need for the BMDS, which is to protect against an accidental or single strike representative of a launch by a failed state or terrorist organization, is validated.

Technological Application. The technical nature of an issue tends to convey the degree of associated complexity. Usually, as a subject becomes more technical in nature, the amount of confusion, ambiguity, complexity, and vagueness increases. This dynamic also tends to place alternatives and solutions at risk. The NATO MD discussion

is illustrative of this predicament. The NATO MD discussion is entangled in both the political interests of European nations and the uncertainty regarding the technical complexity.

The technical dynamic is best understood as a simple concept when one compares the BMDS-EC in Europe to that of the Pacific region where the BMDS is already employed. The BMDS currently defends the most of the United States from a simple ballistic missile launched from North Korea. Interestingly, both Iran and North Korea have developing nuclear programs. Like North Korea, Iran continues to actively pursue a missile capability able to deliver a potential strike (capable of carrying WMD) to the continental United States. Therefore, both countries aspire to incrementally develop their technology and capability to achieve the objective of either delivering or threatening to deliver a ballistic missile against the United States.

The BMDS was employed in cooperation with several Pacific Allies to protect against a developing North Korean capability. As a consequence, the United States and Japan entered into agreement to integrate system components located in the region, inclusive of components located in Japan. This agreement is similar to those America is finalizing with Poland and the Czech Republic to position integrated elements of the BMDS-EC on their territories respectively. Fortunately, with BMDS the United States is postured to intercept a rudimentary missile launched from North Asia. This capability is assuring to the American people and leadership amidst reports that North Korea is once again preparing a missile for launch; a missile that may be capable of reaching the United States.¹⁸ The engagement posture of the BMDS was recently validated with a successful intercept of a simple target - a failing satellite that was poised to contaminate

any landing area with toxic gas after reentry.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the intercept capability does not exist for the Iranian threat. Unfortunately, Iran recently demonstrated an exponential leap in its technological advancement of the capabilities required to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by successfully using space launch vehicle technology to put its first satellite into orbit.²⁰ The BMDS-EC provides the desired rudimentary capability to intercept any ICBM launched from Iran to the United States or Europe. Once the European capabilities are established and operational, they too can defend against this rudimentary missile threat.

After the initial defensive capability is established, modification or improvements to address technological advancements or more sophisticated threats can be applied. Improvements and enhancements developed during the interim period, the period required to construct and employ the BMDS-EC, can be applied thereafter.

Technological enhancements to address the complexities possessed by more advanced missile delivery programs, such as the Iranian missile program, are currently under development and testing. The United States recently validated the testing of the embedded capability to successfully engage a target with more advanced technological capability with the intercept of a “separating target, meaning that the target warhead separated from its booster rocket.”²¹ Future testing will address more advanced technology using an incremental approach to deal with multiple warheads and countermeasures. Eventually, the program could develop into a truly global missile defense system capable of defending the full range of target sets.

The development of the more technologically advanced MD capability is a very costly endeavor. Cost considerations must be factored into the decision to proceed to

the next horizon of the BMDS program. Fortunately, given the current fielding approach, program horizons facilitate the ability to decide on the desired level of operational capability. These horizons and options present the Obama Administration with flexibility in determining the desired end state.

Economic Distraction. The current economic crisis in the United States has generated prioritization discussions regarding the monumental cost of any MD capability. The discussion deals with the decisions and prioritization required to manage the competing demands for the U.S. budget and generate a way-ahead acceptable to meet the priorities. Moreover, the same quagmire exists for the NATO leadership that confronts U.S. leadership – what is the price to pay to offset the loss of life suffered in a ballistic missile attack, or the political cost of submitting to blackmail by an adversary? In this case, the simple answer is that the price is equal to the employment of BMDS-EC.

“The economy will recover (although) it won’t recover anytime soon,”²² is the consensus among economy theorists like David Leonhardt. He acknowledges that the “Obama administration faces an imposing economic to-do list. It will try to end the financial crisis and recession as quickly as possible, even as it starts work on an agenda that will inspire opposition from a murderers’ row of interest groups.”²³ This argument is supportive of the strategic challenge outlined earlier in this paper that proposes the administration review, and in due course pursue, the MD program and effort commensurate with their studied decision. The administration must generate a way-ahead that incorporates the implementation of BMDS and the continuation of the program writ large into the existing national agenda items inclusive of the economic

challenge. Leonhardt believes that the government will eventually stimulate the economy back to life after the application of the government's enormous resources, "so that for the first time in 70 years, the epicenter of the American economy can be placed outside of California or New York or the industrial Midwest. It can be placed in Washington."²⁴ Investment in the MD program is part of the solution.

Despite this simple solution, NATO leadership has aggressively debated the merits of any MD capability. An effective and integrated system could cost NATO tens of billions of dollars or euros. This is an exorbitant cost for the Alliance which is currently struggling to meet the monetary and resource requirements across the entire spectrum of its existing commitments. Several countries dismiss a potential MD capability simply because they feel NATO cannot incur any additional expenses to its strained budget, much less the magnitude of costs associated with establishing an organic or independent MD capability or system. Publicly, the French lead the opposition to MD in Europe. The most prevailing fiscal argument expressed by the French is that the huge cost of such defenses would deprive funds from other things needed in Europe,²⁵ such as military operations that are already resource constrained. Member nations are participating in military activities in Europe, in the Mediterranean, and in Afghanistan with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Understandably, this is the same argument addressed earlier that is facing the new American leadership. Interestingly, the price is almost negligible to NATO if BMDS-EC is integrated into developing NATO capabilities (specifically the Theater Missile Defense(TMD) and Command and Control (C2) programs).²⁶ NATO would experience negligible costs because the bulk of its implementation is borne by the United States.²⁷

Subsequent decisions by the Alliance can be made based on the desired level of enhancement to the protection provided by the BMDS-EC. Potential incremental capabilities could be considered to address additional threats to nations as they develop. With this proposal, therefore, cost as an issue in NATO can be significantly mitigated, eliminated or discounted; and the attention shifted to the emerging threats.

Caution must be exercised not to reduce funding to the BMDS-EC lest we face the dilemmas posed by proponents of the system – What is the price tag of having Europe and the United States held hostage and open to blackmail by Iran or a terrorist group that may have WMD-tipped, ballistic missiles?²⁸ Or the potential reality of unsteady nuclear states such as North Korea, Pakistan, or even the RF, eroding into failed states – failed states that could either threaten or launch a WMD-tipped ballistic missile at the United States or an ally? Both Poland and the Czech Republic have been singled out by the RF as targets of Russian missiles because of their support for BMDS-EC and their agreements to emplace elements on their soil. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they feel threatened and even blackmailed by the RF. Certainly the United States and NATO will not abandon these allies.²⁹

NATO Consensus. The prioritization dilemma confronting the Obama Administration is shared by NATO leadership as they continuously debate the myriad of issues confronting the Alliance, while simultaneously studying and developing a decision/policy on missile defense. Enlargement, terrorism, and the relationship with the European Union are only a few of the strategic issues in NATO competing for attention, prioritization and resources. Growth and shifting focus has made its ability to address and decide upon issues and problems exponentially more difficult in recent years.³⁰ The

dynamics of these strategic issues contribute to the challenges confronting the leadership in an increasingly complex environment.

Considering the dynamics involved with expensive and politically charged issues in NATO, a decision of agreement among all 26 Nations is far from simple. Political decision-making is continuous during times of peace, crisis, and conflict, and inherently generates commensurate levels of friction. Friction is very prevalent in the Alliance and a natural byproduct of problems worked and developed to resolution in both peace and war.³¹

Yet, despite the inherent frictions within the Alliance, there is nonetheless significant agreement and momentum in NATO at the strategic level regarding one aspect of the BMDS-EC - the reaction to the aggressive nature of the Russians. Both Poland and the Czech Republic have been singled out by the RF with threatening rhetoric. Additionally, the leadership in these two nations face opposition to hosting BMDS-EC elements (i.e. the interceptor and radar site respectively), by critics opposing the need for the BMDS-EC and by segments of their population. Their populations are not entirely convinced of the need for the system, although the RF actions are quickly changing the dynamics. The Cold War tactics and threats of the RF significantly reinforced the fragile internal support in Poland and the Czech Republic. In reaction to these antics and in an attempt to assure the population, the Polish Government upped the ante to the United States during the negotiations for the emplacement of the interceptor site on Polish territory by securing U.S. PATRIOT air and missile defense weapon systems as part of their defense agreement. The perceived need for additional air and missile defense systems was in response to the RF declarations to target the

BMDS-EC elements in Poland and the Czech Republic if the United States went ahead with the employment. Additionally, the Czech Republic prioritized their agreement with the United States and received the needed support from their populace and parliament, thus sending a clear message to Moscow.³² Anything short of an unflinching conveyance of support from American leadership could jeopardize the fragile populace endorsement for the BMDS-EC in those countries. As previously mentioned, NATO recently expressed its endorsement of the U.S. system in Europe.³³ Now, the United States must reciprocate and stand by our Allies at this critical juncture. The President and Congress must outwardly demonstrate their support to those nations in this enterprise. Both nations find themselves internally riddled with the same tensions and similar critical points of view discussed in the United States regarding the BMDS-EC.

To address the need for a decision on MD in the Alliance, and to mitigate risk, NATO tasked the Missile Defense Project Group (MDPG) to provide alternatives for a potential MD capability that could eventually emerge into an agreed system or capability. During the past several years, the MDPG and subordinate groups and teams have studied alternatives for consideration available to senior NATO bodies. During the Bucharest Summit in 2008, the Allies declared that ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat to NATO, confirmed that the Alliance will explore ways to link the U.S. capability with current NATO MD efforts, and tasked the development of options for a comprehensive MD architecture to extend coverage to all Allied territory and populations not otherwise covered by the US BMDS-EC for review at the upcoming 2009 Summit.³⁴ The primary points of friction under study include: costs, desired levels

of protection, threat, consequence management, C2 arrangements and the politically sensitive but not practical topic of deterrence.

The MDPG considered the full spectrum of options ranging from the current French position of deterrence (status quo), to variants of systems and components integrated with the BMDS-EC, to broader ideas of an independent and organic NATO system, to the extreme option/course of action of implementing the broader global missile defense system in cooperation with the RF. The MDPG is in the process of providing an agreed proposal to all relevant senior NATO bodies and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) irrespective of the ongoing debate in the political arena.³⁵ As debate continues the NAC will determine the agreed proposal to present to the Heads of State and Governments (HoSG). Fueled by the report provided by the MDPG and discussion surrounding the RF influence on member nations, the HoSG will be postured for a decision on the future of MD in NATO at the Summit later this year.

U.S. National Interests/Political Sensitivity. The Administration and Congress are faced with the challenges of establishing priorities for their agendas. Naturally, the American leadership will feel compelled to prioritize domestic and economic items devoting the commensurate resources to fix those issues. Consequently, considering this and the magnitude of the devastating economic situation confronting the new leadership, the defense budget is expected to shrink.

Despite the legacy of support for MD in the United States, the cost of the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with the need to support future military requirements compete with the MD program for funding. Therefore, continuing the BMDS program, much less the BMDS-EC, is drawing considerable attention and

scrutiny. Critics of the need for MD are unsure of President Obama's path on defense spending and question the programs validity by arguing the war efforts and rebuilding our forces in the years to come are the more urgent priority.³⁶ Critics are not convinced a threat warranting a MD system even exists. However, recent events in both Iran and North Korea signal the reality of the potential for an eventual attack by these adversaries. If Congress or the Obama Administration cut appropriations to the program and the nation subsequently suffers an attack on its homeland by a ballistic missile containing a weapon of mass destruction, neither will feel comfortable about the outcome nor will they relish in the ensuing blame asserted by the American people seeking accountability. The Director of the Missile Defense Agency, Lt. Gen. Henry Obering, has stated that the cost of American lives far outweigh the cost of the MD system:

If we can prevent one attack – whether it be from another country, from a non-state actor, terrorist organization using these types of weapons – one attack on an American city – we would more than pay for this program many, many times over ... and of course the prevention of the loss of life.³⁷

Consequently, defaulting on the security of the homeland as a primary responsibility, it is expected that the new leadership will support the program aligned with the needs of homeland defense and the National Missile Defense Act of 1999. The need for a defense system is more consequential than the cost incurred in funding it. The Act gives the flexibility to the leadership to determine the level of appropriations necessary for the program to meet the identified need. A reduction in funding commensurate with defined objectives does not signal a lack of support; nor does the consolidation of related agencies or other missile defense related programs whose purpose is to extract efficiencies while eliminating or reducing redundancies. Better

defined objectives and potentially more efficiency in the program itself might even translate to a more effective defense system.

Way Ahead

The momentum generated in dealing with the RF rhetoric should serve as balance to focus all nations on the need for a defense. The Russian rhetoric is not going to decide whether the United States employs a European land or sea-based MD capability. The RF's continued aggression will certainly fuel resentment among NATO nations, but it will not prevent the employment of the BMDS-EC. Ironically, the Russian leadership has not objected to the MD efforts in the Pacific region that borders the RF. It would certainly be in the best interests of the RF to acquiesce on this issue and adopt a path of complete cooperation and transparency with the objective to unite and develop a global MD system. Therefore, it is in the best interests of the RF to acquiesce and join the U.S. and NATO in a global missile defense program. Using the missile defense issue as the backbone for a new relationship, the opportunities for prosperity and security in the RF are endless. Without compromising national pride and sovereignty during any initial stages of cooperation and transparency, work toward an agreement on arms control and a mutually beneficial missile defense program can begin. Although initially skeptical, Alliance nations and partners would explore further RF cooperation and transparency through the NRC and bi-lateral relations. Eventual recognition of the RF as a formidable power similar to that once enjoyed by the Soviet Union is a possibility. A friendly and powerful Russia is much more desired than an antagonist state feeding off unrealistic desires and forcing itself into undesired and devastating decisions.

The technical and economic factors bearing on the problem must also be considered. Friendly relations between nations inclusive of the RF facilitate a better understanding or agreement of the potential threat, management of technological advancements, and sharing of the costs associated with a potential system. After agreement on a threat assessment, nations can monitor developments by any rogue or maverick states. Any additional or threatening advancement(s) can be addressed technically by the system and diplomatically on a unified front. Lastly, costs shared by all participants significantly reduce the burden to any single state. An underlying factor of the recent support for the BMDS-EC by NATO is the benefit of a very low price tag to member nations.

Recent world-wide events also contribute to the NATO assessment and potential decision as considerations bearing on the problem. NATO has defined a threat in an “agreed assessment.” In this document they also agreed to monitor potential adversaries missile program developments, as well as scrutinize scenarios where friendly nations and allies may somehow lose control of their offensive systems. The developments of the last few months imply that this approach is prudent. These developments include the radical improvements and development of yet another generation of missile technology demonstrated by the Iranians during testing conducted in November (2008)³⁸ and the satellite launch previously mentioned; the threatening rhetoric by Dmitry Medvedev after the presidential election;³⁹ the declaration by North Korea on the eve of President Obama’s inauguration that they have weaponized enough plutonium for several nuclear weapons⁴⁰ (coupled with their posturing of a missile for launch as previously described); and the concerns about the future stability

of the government of a nuclear Pakistan.⁴¹ Albeit these developments are not part of the agreed NATO threat assessment itself, they certainly exist as potential problems.

The current events in the world pose a threat to the security of the homeland and NATO. Adopting the BMDS-EC employment will ensure for the protection of the homeland and the people, territory, and forces of the U.S. and NATO. In consideration that MD is one of the highest priorities of homeland defense, employment of the system prior to the threat launching an attack is paramount.

The Obama Administration Decision. Ironically, the ultimate decision for the President is relatively straight-forward. He should express support for the defense of the homeland writ large and identify missile defense as an indispensable element of the effort. Secondly, he should ensure a comprehensive review of the program. Lastly, he should publish the adjusted policy on MD.

It is very important for the President to send the message to the American people that he concurs with their safety and security as his top priority. This critical and pivotal acknowledgement clearly signals support to our allies and assurances to our potential adversaries. Certainly, NATO and the RF will understand that the prevention of the loss of American lives will be part of any policy adopted by the Administration.

This acknowledgement would also provide the administration time to confront the dynamics inherent in their transition to power in the United States, focus on other issues and priorities demanding the attention of the leadership, and conduct a review of the program. The President can take advantage of the legislation provided in the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 to engender a fresh look at the program. Therefore, through such an assessment the program can better extract efficiencies and facilitate

more effective integration with other defense systems. Eventually considerations, studies, and decisions required in assessing the issues will appropriately promulgate the updated MD decisions and policy.

Lastly, as part of the President's strategy, he should ensure that every American, friend, and foe receives his message. This presents an opportunity for the President to articulate how all of the elements of national power interrelate with the defense of the homeland and their role in dealing with our allies and potential adversaries around the world.⁴² President Obama could use the upcoming NATO Summit to espouse his Administration's policy ensuring that all HoSG clearly understand the position of the United States with relation to the BMDS-EC and NATO MD. He can tell the world that a change of U.S. leadership does not change the fundamental philosophy espoused by his predecessors, and that "defending the American people against these new threats is my highest priority as Commander in Chief, and the highest priority of my Administration."⁴³

Conclusion

In conclusion, American leadership must support the BMDS program in-line with the needs of homeland defense. The President, with the support of Congress, must send the world a strong and clear message. The message must simply convey support for the MD of the United States and NATO allies as an integral part of homeland defense. This acknowledgement would also provide U.S. leadership more time to confront the dynamics of other issues and priorities demanding their attention and inherent in their transition to power in the United States.

The full realization of an integrated MD system providing comprehensive defense to the U.S. homeland and the European allies is predicated on overcoming the strategic leadership challenges facing both the U.S. and NATO leaders. The National Missile Defense Act of 1999 allows the U.S. leadership the flexibility to determine the level of appropriations necessary for the program. A reduction in funding commensurate with defined objectives does not signal a lack of support; nor does the consolidation of related agencies or other missile defense related programs. Ironically, a delay or reduction in funding would force a fresh look at the program potentially extracting efficiencies; thus resulting in a more effective defense system and better bargaining positions in NATO and with the RF. Eventually, after studies and assessment, decisions and policy commensurate with the U.S. interests and national security will ensue ... including an integrated missile defense protecting all of U.S. and NATO territory, population, and forces.

Endnotes

¹ John C. Rood, "U.S. Missile Defense Plans for Europe," March 31, 2008, linked from *The U.S. Department of State – "Remarks at the Sixth Annual Missile Defense Conference,"* Washington, DC, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/rls/rm/105483.htm> (accessed November 15, 2008). Rood, Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, provided a very profound description of the history of the U.S. pursuit of missile defense in Europe. Much of it reflects anecdotal evidence.

² The United States Ballistic Missile Defense System – European Component BMDS-EC is comprised of several different assets and facilities in Europe. Most of the discussion in NATO concerns the radar site planned for the Czech Republic, the interceptor site planned for Poland, and forward-based radar to be positioned in the southeast region of NATO.

³ Lawrence Freedman, "The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists," in *The Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 742. This realization is extracted from the discussion in the text when the United States was struggling with its foreign policy approach and decisions in the face of the risk of nuclear destruction in the 1950s.

⁴ Ibid., 738-9.

⁵ Ibid., 740.

⁶ Donald R. Baucom, "Missile Defense Milestones 1944-1997," *U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense Organization*, <http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/program/milestone.htm> (accessed November 15, 2008).

⁷ NATO membership has increased significantly over the years. During the Cold War there were thirteen members in Europe, plus the United States and Canada. In 1982 Spain joined the Alliance. Since 1999 there have been ten new members, including several former Warsaw Pact Nations, for a total of twenty six members.

⁸ George W. Bush, "National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-23: National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense," memorandum, Washington, DC, December 16, 2002, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-23.htm> (accessed November 15, 2008).

⁹ Donald R. Rumsfeld, "Secretary of Defense Memorandum, Subject: Missile Defense Program Direction," memorandum, Washington, DC, January 2, 2002, <http://www.fas.org/ssp/bmd/d20020102.mda.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2009).

¹⁰ NSPD-23: "National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense."

¹¹ Mike Shuster, "The Future of U.S. Missile Defense, Part 4: Tough Sell for Overseas U.S. Missile Defense Bases," *National Public Radio* (September 25, 2008), <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94998160> (accessed November 13, 2008). In 2008, in order to overcome Russian suspicions of the intent and use of the system, Secretary of Defense Gates introduced a proposal to couple employment of BMDS-EC to the Iranian missile program development. The proposal centered around delaying the crucial last phase of employment (operationalizing) until there was 'incontrovertible' proof of Iran's missile development.

¹² Russian News Agency, "Russia against U.S. missiles in any European anti-missile plans," *National Security Space Institute Space News* (December 12, 2008), 8.

¹³ Peter Brookes, "The Case for European Missile Defense," *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, no. 14 (Spring 2008), 59.

¹⁴ Ahto Lobjakas, "NATO Says Russian Missile Deployment Threatens Arms-Control Efforts," in *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, November 6, 2008. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1339015.html> (accessed on November 13, 2008).

¹⁵ This approach by the Russian Federation is based on the experience of the author and anecdotal evidence and found in several Reuters articles; Kristin Roberts, "Gates, Putin to Face Off Over Missile Defense," April 23, 2007, <http://www.military-quotes.com/forum/gates-putin-face-off-over-t36062.html> (accessed November 15, 2008) and Dmitry Solovyov and Tim Pearce, "Russia Signals to U.S. a Softer Stand on Missiles," *International Herald Tribune*, November 11, 2008, <http://www.iht.com/bin/printfriendly.php?id=17726755> (accessed November 15, 2008).

¹⁶ Stephen J. Blank, "Georgia: The War Russia Lost," *Military Review*, (November-December 2008), 39.

¹⁷ Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better," in *Conflict After the Cold War*, ed. Richard K. Betts, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2002), 452.

¹⁸ FOX News, "North Korea to 'Test Missile Capable of Striking U.S.'," *The Times*, February 2, 2009, http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,487085,00.html (accessed February 3, 2009).

¹⁹ Gerry J. Gilmore, "Navy Missile Likely Hit Fuel Tank on Disabled Satellite," *American Forces Press Service*, February 21, 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=49030> (accessed on February 3, 2009).

²⁰ MSNBC.com News Service, "Pentagon: Iran satellite launch is concern," February 3, 2009, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28988428/> (accessed on February 3, 2009).

²¹ Missile Defense Agency News Release 07-NEWS-0037, "Sea-Based Missile Defense "Hit to Kill" Intercept Achieved," June 22, 2007.

²² David Leonhardt, "The Big Fix," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 1, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/01/magazine/011Economy-t.html> (accessed February 2, 2009). The economy discussion is extracted from the argument presented by David Leonhardt who quotes several noted economists in his discussion.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Julian Hale, "French DM Casts Doubt on Need for Missile Defense," *National Security Space Institute Space News* (December 5, 2008), 8.

²⁶ Currently NATO is developing a very flexible and robust Active Layered Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) program whose design, along with improvements in other Command and Control (C2) programs and capabilities, allows for integration with a future MD capability. ALTBMD contains a flexible, open system architecture with nations providing sensor and weapon systems for both the lower and upper layers of defense and NATO providing the integrated Battle Management, Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (BMC3I) system inclusive of an upgraded Air Command and Control System (ACCS). ALTBMD is considered a Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system and program in NATO. NATO does not include TMD in the category of Missile Defense (MD). NATO considers these two as very different defense capabilities. TMD is the protection of a fighting force deployed in a 'theater' of operations, whereas MD is the protection of forces, population, and territory.

²⁷ Many NATO nations are under the impression that the United States will provide the BMDS-EC to NATO as a national contribution. This means that NATO will not bear any cost burden for the BMDS-EC. The United States, by declaring the BMDS-EC as a national contribution will provide it and associated components cost free to NATO. This declaration also considers that the United States will command and control the system until an agreeable relationship is accepted by all NATO nations. Therefore, some nations see the contribution as only one of the alternatives for any potential NATO MD system, while other nations see it as an integrated part of a more comprehensive and overall NATO MD System.

²⁸ Daniel P. Fata, "What should Obama do About Missile Defense?," *The Washington Times*, November 30, 2008, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/nov/30/fata-what-should-obama-do-about-missile-defense/> (accessed January 3, 2009).

²⁹ Milan Vodicka, "Russia Shouldn't Have A Veto On Missile Defense," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 11, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123431332358270821.html> (accessed February 11, 2009). Vodicka presents a strong argument that if the Obama Administration does not follow through with the BMDS-EC "supporters of the missile shield would feel abandoned by the U.S." He argues that the Russian's interjection, if successful (or even perceived successful by an unrelated and/or arbitrary reversal of support by the Obama Administration for the MD elements in the Czech Republic or Poland) represents proof of Russian influence over Central Europe. Potentially it also represents "recognition of its veto power over European (American and NATO) security policy." Lastly he argues that the Czech and Polish leaders would lose significant credibility among their opponents and with their people.

³⁰ Agreement within NATO on any issue is by consensus. The ability of nations to achieve consensus on issues has dramatically changed – becoming much more difficult with the expanded membership of NATO.

³¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds., trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 119-120.

³² Karel Janicek, "Czech Senate Approves US missile Defense Base," *National Security Space Institute Space News* (December 5, 2008), 2. The lower chamber of the Czech Parliament has not voted and will vote sometime this year. It is expected that the vote will take place prior to the NATO Summit in April 2009.

³³ Brookes, "The Case for European Missile Defense," 59.

³⁴ Paul Gallis, "*The NATO Summit at Bucharest, 2008*," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS22847 (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, May 5, 2008), 3, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS224887.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2009).

³⁵ There are differing views on the utility of a potential MD capability in NATO. The views range the full spectrum of thought. A few nations feel the potential costs associated with any potential MD system capability are outrageous, coupled with a minority opinion that there is no real threat generating a need for a system, they conclude that pursuing a MD system capability is useless. There is additional thought that deterrence is sufficient in and of itself. Other nations in NATO identify a threat and feel any cost value is inconsequential to saving the lives of any of the population in any of the NATO member states. Some take it even further or with another view that demands protection is provided equally to all member states.

³⁶ Philip Coyle, "Ask McCain and Obama about Missile Defense," *Center for Defense Information, Missile Defense Update*, September 16, 2008, <http://www.cdi.org/program/index.cfm?programid=6> (assessed December 19, 2008).

³⁷ Mike Shuster, "The Future of U.S. Missile Defense, Part 1: Missile Defense Aimed At Potential Threats," *National Public Radio* (September 22, 2008), <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94838546> (accessed November 13, 2008).

³⁸ Uzi Rubin, "Iran's Game-changer: Long-Range Missile Test Challenges Obama," November 24, 2008, *National Security Space Institute Space News* (November 26, 2008), 16.

³⁹ Ellen Barry and Sophia Kishkovsky, "Russia Warns of Missile Deployment," *The New York Times*, November 6, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/06/world/europe/06russia.html> (accessed November 6, 2008).

⁴⁰ Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea Says It Has 'Weaponized' Plutonium," *The New York Times*, January 18, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/18/world/asia/18korea.html?_r=1 (accessed February 10, 2009).

⁴¹ David E. Sanger, "Obama's Worst Pakistan Nightmare," *The New York Times Magazine*, January 11, 2009, 32-37.

⁴² MSNBC, "Iran launch," This article quotes White House spokesman Robert Gibbs in response to the satellite launch on 3 February 2009, "this action does not convince us that Iran is acting responsibly to advance stability or security in the region," and Mr. Gibbs reiterated that the administration will use all elements of its national power to deal with Iran.

⁴³ NSPD-23: "National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense."